

NSC BRIEFING

27 October 1954

SOVIET-YUGOSLAV RELATIONS

I. Sudden Soviet increase in tempo of its efforts improve relations with Yugoslavia. Effort began soon after Stalin's death, but appeared casual and without much substance.

A. It started when Soviet Union appointed ambassador to Belgrade in June 1953.

B. Since then some of Satellites established full diplomatic relations, and concluded modest trade agreements.

C. Border incidents (at high level until mid-53) virtually ceased by 54.

D. Critical Orbit propaganda about Yugoslavia gradually diminished.

II. In last weeks, Moscow's approach to relations with Yugoslavia has shown surprising new aspects.

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- A. In mid-September Moscow propaganda started quoting Yugoslav press and leaders; quotes carefully selected to give impression of Yugoslav support for Soviet policy, and carried without comment.**
- B. Since then the anti-Tito clandestine Radio Free Yugoslavia has gone off the air, and jamming of Yugoslav Russian broadcasts has stopped. Also anti-Tito books have been removed from bookshelves in Poland.**
- C. Last week Moscow celebrated 10th anniversary liberation of Belgrade, with tributes to role of Yugoslav partisans--as well as Soviet army. Since the 1948 break, the Soviet Union had claimed full credit for the liberation.**
- D. A short term and rather small (\$5 million) trade agreement was signed between Moscow and Belgrade trade agencies on 1 October. Yugoslavia has agreed**

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to Soviet suggestion for talks in Moscow on a one-year governmental trade agreement. (Orbit trade is only 3% of Yugoslavia's trade now, the American embassy in Belgrade thinks it could eventually exceed present average - 25%).

E. Vyshinsky's letter to UN Security Council "taking cognizance" of the Trieste settlement in part reflects Soviet desire not to jeopardize improving relations with Belgrade.

III. Belgrade has not rejected these Orbit moves, saying it has always been willing to normalize relations on an equal basis.

A. It has agreed to negotiate for reciprocal distribution of Soviet and Yugoslav films, which would be the first widespread distribution of each other's cultural propaganda in the last six years.

B. It has now agreed to allow Soviet commercial planes to resume overflights to Albania.

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IV. In public and private statements, Tito and other Yugoslav leaders have stated that cooperation with the West should not bar improved relations with the East. This is in line with their view stated since early summer 1954 that "a certain equilibrium of power had been created whereby the cold war--previously in danger of developing into an open conflict--became an armed peace, where East-West conferences could search for a way out of the situation."

- A. Tito has explicitly stated (16 October) that he will not "go back to Moscow."
- B. The Yugoslavs will continue to cooperate with the West for defense against aggression.
- C. They approve of unification efforts for Europe, and even properly controlled rearmament Western Germany. Simultaneous with these efforts, however, Yugoslavs believe all efforts should also be made to negotiate with the Russians, whose policy of relaxing tension in Europe they now characterize as "permanent."

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D. Take stand that, as socialist state, cannot join any organization (such as NATO) which, in their view, has primarily an anti-Communist basis.

V. Direct propaganda treatment of the USSR by Yugoslavia continues to improve, now being neither antagonistic nor friendly.

A. Recent Yugoslav speeches celebrating the anniversary of the liberation of Belgrade still gave almost all of the share of credit to their own forces, and reminded the listeners of "quarrels and disagreements" between Soviet and Yugoslav commanders.

B. Although a ceremony was held at a cemetery for Soviet and Yugoslav soldiers, it was reported to be a "pretty dismal" affair.

VI. Increased tempo of Soviet activity stems from Kremlin reevaluation of its policy toward Yugoslavia and appears aimed mainly at blocking a further Yugoslav shift to the West.

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- A. Moscow must realize that its normalization efforts in last year have yielded little, and it apparently considers new moves are needed to counterbalance growing Yugoslav ties with West, which have been strengthened by Balkan military alliance and Trieste settlement.**
- B. While such gestures fit general pattern conciliatory Soviet policy throughout Europe, Kremlin may also think them especially productive when applied to Communist Yugoslavia for several reasons: As test of "deviationist" regime's responses; as preparation for any future offers; as easy means inflaming Western suspicions of Yugoslavia.**
- C. Moscow may plan eventually to offer Tito some real bait for Eastern orientation, but no signs yet of a major serious offer--which it probably expects would be rejected.**

D. Moscow would probably first continue to improve atmosphere.

VII. Yugoslavia's own self-interest would appear to preclude a return to the Eastern camp.

- A. Tite's present position has given him practically a Western guarantee of national security as well as military and economic aid, without an infringement on Yugoslavia's independence or internal affairs. Infringement by the USSR was a major cause of the 1948 break.**
- B. The Yugoslavs see in recent Soviet moves (like the withdrawal from satellite joint companies and the agreement with the Chinese on Port Arthur) an indication that USSR recognizes it must interfere less in internal affairs of other states.**
- C. Tite and his leaders still, however, appear to retain enough distrust of the USSR to discount any Soviet offers, even one that might go so far**

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as to promise a relationship as independent as

that of Peking to Moscow.

- B. The Tito regime nonetheless may believe that improved relations with the Soviet bloc can be used to better its bargaining position with the West.